

## **Immanuel Approach Safety Nets, Basic (MHPs)** **(Practice Exercise to Follow Completion of Video Training Segments #5 & #6)**

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**NOTE:** This entire exercise is **optional** for mental health professionals who already have tools for helping clients self-regulate.

**Reminder regarding Confidentiality:** If there are poignant, beautiful details that you would like to be able to share with others, please ask the recipient's permission.

**A. Splinter-free positive memory that includes God:** Many people have positive connection-with-God memories that still include trauma splinters. And if the traumatic memory that the person works on later in the emotional healing process resonates with these unresolved splinters, the positive parts of the initial appreciation memory can get blended together with the negative thoughts and emotions from the now activated splinters. In this scenario, if the recipient gets into trouble later in the session and you try to take them back to the initial appreciation memory, instead of finding a safety net you just find more trauma.

If the recipient is describing appreciation memories that may have splinters (that is, the positive memories being described are about the Lord's presence in the midst of trauma), *it is very important to coach them to deliberately find positive memories that are completely free of splinters.* Again, make sure to help them find memories without *any* aspect of pain or trauma. If they discover that all of their memories of positive God-connections are memories of God's presence in the midst of trauma, you can use a very simple, completely splinter-free non-God memory and then upgrade to an Immanuel positive memory.

**B. Multiple memories to build momentum:** The recipient will need multiple positive memories to build momentum if they get stuck in a really intense bad memory (more about this in training segment #8), so have your notes regarding the recipient's other positive memories handy. *NOTE: if the recipient does not already have at least three splinter-free positive memories in which they have been able to connect with God, use this exercise to collect more splinter-free God memories.*

**C. What about those who have not (yet) had experiences of connecting with God?** As just mentioned, this safety-net exercise *requires* that the recipient have at least three splinter-free positive memories where they have been able to establish a connection with God. *For recipients who have not yet been able to connect with God in their positive memories – use this exercise slot for more troubleshooting.*

**D. Practice teams should stay the same (if at all possible):** Again, it is actually fairly important for practice teams to stay the same throughout the series of practice exercises, if at all possible.

**E. Coach recipient to describe everything, *regardless of....*:** Remember to keep coaching the recipient to describe everything that comes into their awareness, *regardless of whether it makes sense, feels important, or is neatly packaged.* This will often help the recipient to recognize subtle manifestations of the Lord's presence that they might otherwise miss, and subtle content coming from the Lord that they might otherwise miss.

**F. Short term and unconscious priming memory:** Again, I strongly encourage taking 3 minutes to read through the facilitator instructions immediately prior to going through the exercise. This takes advantage of short term memory and unconscious priming memory, and will help the instructions feel more familiar and comfortable as you are actually using them.

## Facilitator instructions (~28 min for each recipient):

**1) Choose traumatic memory:** Help recipient use the following guidelines to choose an appropriate mild-moderate traumatic memory: *\*For time-efficiency, ask recipients to do this before the practice exercise (as preparation homework).\**

- A memory you have talked about before, and that has been emotionally connected when you have talked about it in the past. (Please do not use a memory that you have talked about, but with emotional numbness/disconnection – we don't want a major traumatic memory to connect emotionally for the first time in the middle of your beginner exercise.)
- A memory you have talked about before *without getting stuck and/or decompensating*. (You did not need a lot of time to get back on your feet, and you did not need others to help you get back on your feet.)

## 2) Positive memory recall and appreciation (5-7 min):

- Coach the recipient to use their strongest splinter-free memory for their initial positive memory. If you notice splinters in their positive memory, help them switch to one of their other positive memories that is totally splinter-free.
- Coach the recipient to close their eyes, and to imagine, describe, and appreciate their *splinter-free* positive memory.
- If the recipient gives a sparse description and does not reconnect with the memory, gently prompt them to fill in more details until they connect with the memory and feel appreciation.

## 3) Interactive connection invitation and request (5 min):

The recipient has their eyes closed, they're imagining themselves inside the memory, and they're feeling grateful. Now coach them to ask for help with the transition to an interactive connection. **Sample coaching:** "Okay, now I want you to pray something like, 'Jesus, I welcome You to be with me in this memory, help me to perceive Your living presence – help me to make the transition from **remembering** you with me to perceiving your presence as living and interactive.' And then notice and describe everything that comes into your awareness, regardless of whether it feels important, makes sense, or is neatly packaged."

#### 4) Immanuel Approach Safety Nets (16 min):

**\*For those who do *not* perceive Jesus and establish an interactive connection:**

Do NOT go to the traumatic memory. (Remember, this is the second safety net). Instead, use this exercise for troubleshooting. (Refresher coaching instructions for troubleshooting are included at bottom of document.)

**\*For those who *do* perceive Jesus and establish an interactive connection:**

After the recipient has described their connection with Jesus, coach them to describe their traumatic memory until they are emotionally connected to it. **Sample coaching:** "Okay, now I want you to close your eyes, imagine yourself back inside the traumatic memory, and describe the details until you feel connected to the negative emotions from inside the memory." \*\*Note: If you and/or the recipient are concerned that negative emotions might get too intense, including fewer details and describing from outside-observer perspective are lower intensity options\*\*

Once the recipient has connected to the traumatic memory, you will both pretend you are coming to the end of available time for a healing exercise, but that the traumatic memory is still not fully resolved. **Sample coaching:** "I'm noticing that we're coming to the end of our time for today, so I think we need to deploy the safety net so that we get your plane back on the ground by the end of the exercise. So now I would like you to close your eyes, imagine yourself being back inside of your memory of (Fill in \_\_\_\_\_), and describe the memory in as much detail as possible."

***If needed:*** If recipient is having difficulty connecting with positive memory, be very persistent with coaching them to describe details, help with reminders regarding specific details, and coach to savor best parts.

***If needed:*** If the recipient describes the first positive memory, in detail, and is still stuck in the negative emotions from the traumatic memory, use a second positive memory. If the same thing happens with the second positive memory, use a third positive memory. (Again, more about this in training segment #8.)

When recipient is connected to positive memory and feeling gratitude, coach interactive connection invitation and request. (Sample coaching in section 3, above). If they connect with Jesus, coach to describe in detail and enjoy time with Jesus.

***If they are unable to connect with Jesus:*** Coach them to spend several more minutes with positive memory recall and appreciation and then try again. Keep repeating this cycle until they connect with Jesus or you run out of time. \*At the very least, they will spend a lot of time recalling positive memories and being grateful.\*

## 5) Additional sample coaching for dealing with positive memories with splinters:

### *Identifying splinter and redirecting to splinter-free positive memory:*

**Sample coaching:** Excuse me – I just want to check in regarding something. If I understand correctly, this beautiful, positive experience that you're describing is very close to (Or, "in the larger context of") the traumatic memory of \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank). Am I understanding that correctly?

Recipient response – some form of "Yes," "Yeah that's right."

**Sample coaching:** Well, this is certainly a beautiful positive memory, and it would be a fine memory to use to establish an interactive connection with Jesus *if we didn't need it for a safety net*. However, since we're preparing for a trauma-healing exercise, this positive memory needs to be a safety-net memory. So what that means is that we need a positive memory with *no splinters*. In fact, it's best if there aren't any splinters in the area. And I'm concerned that there might still be splinters in the area.

Okay, so let's find a positive memory that has no association with trauma. A memory that includes an experience of God's presence is ideal, but if you can't find a positive God-memory that has no association with trauma, a simple technique is to start with just a simple, totally positive memory, *that has no association with trauma*, and then upgrade.

### *Response to protest that they have already done a lot of healing work on the associated traumatic memories/wider traumatic context:*

**Sample coaching:** It's wonderful that you've done a lot of healing work on these memories, and it's wonderful that you can now perceive Jesus' presence in these memories. And I realize that you can't feel any splinters when you are thinking about these memories right now. But it's just so common to find lingering splinters in traumatic memories – it's so common to find lingering splinters that are silent until you stumble onto them when they get triggered. So it's important that we use memories that have no association with trauma.

## 6) Refresher coaching instructions for troubleshooting:

**First**, before doing anything more complicated, coach the recipient through the invitation and request prayer again, and encourage them to be *especially careful* to describe everything that comes into their awareness. **Sample coaching:** "Okay, before doing anything more complicated, I want to try something really easy that sometimes works. I want you to stay inside your positive memory, I want you to pray again to welcome Jesus and ask Him to help you perceive His living, interactive presence, and then I want you to be *especially careful* to describe whatever comes into your awareness – I want you to pay attention to even faint mental content on the periphery of your awareness, and I want you to describe it even if it doesn't feel the least bit important, even if it doesn't seem to make any sense at all, and even if it's still a mess (as opposed to being neatly packaged)."

- ***If the recipient perceives & connects with Jesus as a result of this first step of simple troubleshooting:*** 1.) Coach them to describe their perception and connection ***in detail***. 2.) If there is time, coach them to just enjoy hanging out with Jesus (and, as always, coach them to observe and describe whatever comes into their awareness.)

***If the recipient DOES NOT perceive & connect with Jesus as result of first step:***

Coach the recipient to ask for guidance regarding what's in the way. **Sample coaching:** "Now I would like you to ask the Lord, 'Jesus, what's in the way of my being able to perceive your presence and connect with you?' And then observe and describe everything that comes into your awareness, regardless of whether it feels important, makes sense, or is neatly packaged."

Help the recipient to focus and get words for any question, fear, or issue that comes forward; coach them to talk directly to Jesus about the question, fear, or issue; and then coach them to observe and describe whatever comes into their awareness.

- ***If the recipient perceives & connects with Jesus:*** 1.) Coach them to describe their perception and connection ***in detail***. 2.) If there is time, coach them to just enjoy hanging out with Jesus (and, as always, coach them to observe and describe whatever comes into their awareness.)